

# REPORT

## Investigating the Effects of **Armed Conflicts on Financial Resource Mobilisation** among Non-Governmental Organisations in Burkina Faso





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## List of Acronyms

<b>ACLED</b>	<b>Armed Conflict Location &amp; Event Data</b>
<b>ARPS</b>	<b>Aborigines Rights Protection Society</b>
<b>CBOs</b>	<b>Community-Based Organisations</b>
<b>CFA</b>	<b>West Africa CFA Franc</b>
<b>CMS</b>	<b>Church Missionary Society</b>
<b>CSOs</b>	<b>Civil Society Organisations</b>
<b>DAs</b>	<b>Development Associations</b>
<b>ICG</b>	<b>International Crisis Group</b>
<b>IEP</b>	<b>Institute for Economics and Peace</b>
<b>JNIM</b>	<b>Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin</b>
<b>KII</b>	<b>Key Informant Interviews</b>
<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Non Governmental Organisations</b>
<b>NRC</b>	<b>Norwegian Refugee Council</b>
<b>SPONG</b>	<b>Permanent Secretariat of NGOs in Burkina Faso</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>United States of America</b>
<b>USAID</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>
<b>USD</b>	<b>United States Dollars</b>
<b>WACSI</b>	<b>West Africa Civil Society Institute</b>

## Executive Summary

The interwoven, yet complex relationship between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the socio-political context in which they operate has long been a subject of inquiry. How does the socio-political context influence the emergence of CSOs and the thematic areas in which they operate? In what ways do CSOs influence social and political issues? And how do donors influence or are influenced by CSOs in countries where the socio-political context is constantly mutating? Such intricate questions capture the purpose of this research endeavour which seeks to investigate the effect of armed conflicts, as an evolving context, on resource mobilisation among civil society organisations, particularly NGOs in Burkina Faso.

This research leverages a mixed methods using both surveys and interviews to collect data and capture factors shaping international and local funding to NGOs in Burkina Faso. The survey recorded responses from 77 NGOs out of a pool of 268 registered NGOs at the Permanent Secretariat of NGOs in Burkina Faso (SPONG). Additional qualitative data was recorded from 11 Key Informant Interviews (KII). The study also leveraged secondary data through the review of annual reports on governmental records of international funding streams to NGOs in Burkina Faso from 2001 to 2021. Key findings of the study reveal that armed conflicts have negatively affected both international and local funding to NGOs in Burkina Faso. Both primary and secondary data highlight that funding streams to NGOs have decreased over the years as the frequency of armed conflicts increased. A critical observation is that while overall funding mobilised by NGOs decreased, organisations working in the humanitarian sector witnessed an increase in international funding. The emerging funding dynamics has triggered an adaptation mechanism among NGOs, particularly those not engaged in humanitarian work. While some have developed innovative strategies to adapt and survive, others have slightly shifted their work towards the humanitarian sector and are adjusting to donors' new priorities. Some innovations to mobilise both international and local funding include using social media to reach the diaspora, organising gala dinners for crowdfunding, leveraging internal resources to provide services at a fee, etc.

An emerging finding is that organisations adjusting their work to the humanitarian sector are adopting what this study refers to as hybrid funding, which consists of tapping into two or more funding sources both locally and internationally to either fund an activity or ensure financial sustainability. The research also captured that most of the NGOs that received in the past at least CFA 200 million (USD 329,000) in annual funding are adjusting to donors' new priorities. Thus, they are steadily departing from their original activities to now include humanitarian work in their thematic areas. As the context is becoming harsh, this report posits key recommendations to enable NGOs to survive and thrive.

**“Our beliefs and convictions have changed  
because we must survive” KI11**



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## 1.0. Introduction

Over recent years, a new sociopolitical context has emerged in the Sahel region in West Africa. Burkina Faso, one of the Sahelian countries, is severely affected by armed conflicts. In 2022, Burkina Faso was the second country most affected by terrorism after Afghanistan and recorded the largest increase in deaths worldwide, from 759 in 2021 to 1135 in 2022 (IEP, 2023). These developments suggest an emerging context likely to affect civil society organisations (CSOs) in various ways, including resource mobilisation.

Since the 17th Century, arguably the early traces of civil society in West Africa, emerging contexts have remained critical in shaping the civic space (WACSI, 2015). From the early efforts of people organising to fight colonial powers, to now addressing social and governance issues, CSOs have often addressed the challenges plaguing the contexts in which they exist. As contexts evolve and shape CSOs, they have, over the years, morphed from “colonial civil society” to just “civil society” (Obadare, 2015) as their focus has mutated from fighting colonialism to addressing social and governance challenges (Monga, 1996).

A critical factor for CSOs remains access to resources. While the context may shape the nature of CSOs, the group whose interests they serve and the socio-political context may determine their access to financing (Nelson & Dorsey, 2008; Ziemke-Dickens et al., 2012). In the 17th century, anti-colonial fights dominated national contexts and were considered to serve the interests of kingdoms; thus, civic actions were supported by the economies of empires and kingdoms. Today, CSOs address issues based on their constituents’ interests, and although they may complement state actions, their contexts and interests remain bound to their members (Ziemke-Dickens et al., 2012, p1). The above suggests that CSOs’ local contexts, nature, and interest groups may influence their access to financial resources (Monga, 1996; WACSI, 2015).

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), are considered a subset of the broader civil society (UNDP, 2023). While the broader civil society includes several entities such as the media and community organisations,



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NGOs are mainly engaged in development corporation (Monga, 1996). Several studies highlighted factors likely to affect resource mobilisation among civil society organisations, particularly Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) (Parks, 2008; AbouAssi, 2012; Morfit, 2011; WACSI, 2019; Banks et al., 2015; Bromley et al., 2020; Musila, 2019). However, the literature review identified little to no study investigating how armed conflicts in the Sahel region, particularly in Burkina Faso, directly affect resource mobilisation among NGOs. Therefore, this research investigates the effect of armed conflicts, as an emerging context, on resource mobilisation among CSOs in Burkina. The study seeks to understand how armed conflicts affect financial resource mobilisation among NGOs in Burkina Faso. The study captures these dynamics through three main sub-questions: In what ways do armed conflicts affect international funding to NGOs in Burkina Faso? In what ways do armed conflicts affect local funding to NGOs in Burkina Faso? How do NGOs in Burkina Faso react to changes in local and international funding?

This paper's contribution is threefold. First, by uncovering the effects of armed conflicts on NGO funding, the study feeds into the body of literature an analytical perspective on how local contexts influence NGOs' funding. Secondly, the study uncovers tools and strategies NGOs developed to mobilise resources and ensure the sustainability of their activities. These findings also feed into the growing body of literature on NGOs' financial sustainability from an African perspective and represent a learning curve for other CSOs striving to improve their resource mobilisation. Finally, this research attempts to contribute to the theoretical conceptualisation of NGOs' reactions and adaptation mechanisms. Studies highlight NGOs' reactions following a change in donors' priorities as either adjustment to donors' new interests or exit from the relationship with donors (Parks, 2008; AbouAssi, 2012; Morfit, 2011). The analysis in this research digs to understand and classify NGO types and reactions recorded. Furthermore, the study captures actions NGOs undertake beyond the reactions of adjustments and exit.

The remainder of this paper first discusses relevant literature on the emergence and development of CSOs. Secondly, the paper dives into the study's methodology and conceptual framework, including the study design and data collection, and then analyses the data collected. The study ends by positing recommendations towards enabling NGOs to survive and thrive in an increasingly harsh context.





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## 2.0. Understanding CSOs, their evolution, and factors shaping their operations

### 2.1. An Interwoven Destiny: A Civil Society Shaped by Context

People have always been resourceful (Monga, 1996). Against all odds, they organise and take action to protect their communities' well-being. In the 17th century, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) fought against unfair land regulations from British rulers in the Gold Coast, present-day Ghana (Lahouel, 2019); Boukary Koutou in Upper Volta, present-day Burkina Faso, Behanzin and Bio Guerra in Dahomey, present-day Benin, fought against the French to protect their people's well-being.

Such organising against colonial powers mushroomed across Africa and has morphed over the centuries from local military-led resistance in some kingdoms into pan-African, and pan-regional political actions affirming the self-determination of Africa to ensure self-governance and social development (Obadare, 2015). These events brewed the concept of "colonial civil society" (WACSI, 2015), as their main aim was to fight colonialism.

Since contexts and societal issues change, civil society is also bound to transformations (WACSI, 2015). "Colonial Civil Society" has evolved from anti-colonialism into interest groups and associations, both formal and informal, expressing and defending the needs of their members and the vulnerable (Nancy & Yontcheva, 2006). Such groupings include non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), development associations (DAs), etc., with varying thematic areas, from humanitarian work to policy. According to Célestin Monga (1996), civil society refers to:

***“New spaces for communication and discussion over which the state has no control.... including groups, organisations, and personalities that pursue freedom, justice, and the rights of citizenship against authoritarian states” (Monga; 1996, p4)***

The foregoing suggests that the nature of CSOs is rooted in the context that favoured their existence (WACSI, 2015). From the 17th to mid-20th century, the context echoed the fight against colonialism and shaped the types of CSOs. Post-independence, early efforts focused on development and poverty alleviation, and now CSOs have added to their portfolio policy and good governance issues (Nelson & Dorsey, 2008; Ziemke-Dickens et al., 2012). In the face of such mutating dynamics, it is critical to understand how NGOs, as a subset of the civic space, fund their operations and ensure their survival.

## **2.2. On the Origins of Aid and NGO Funding: From Priests to Donors**

In 1825, the English Church Missionary Society (CMS) dispatched a contingent of missionaries to Egypt to revive the Eastern Churches and convert many to Christianity (Sedra, 2004). However, given the possibility of opposition, the missionaries built schools and hospitals and provided social services before building churches (Nurdoñan, 2016). These periods may arguably mark a formal beginning of social and development work in Africa from foreign institutions, turning the continent into one of the largest footprints of Christian schools worldwide (Grace & Wodon, 2021).

Fast forward to the mid-twentieth century, foreign aid gained more prominence. After the Second World War in 1945, Europe was devastated on all levels, from infrastructure to economy. World economists gathered just before 1945 in Bretton Wood to discuss a new financial order and finance Europe’s reconstruction. These concerns birthed the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Jointly with these efforts, the United States of America (USA) unveiled in 1948 “The Mashall Plan”; a 13-billion-dollar aid to support economic recovery in Europe over four years (European Recovery Act/Marshall Plan, 1948). Later, international organisations such as USAID and Care International mushroomed, supporting aid efforts in Europe (Wieters, 2017).



*Photo via Pexels*





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The multi-pronged approach was successful in Europe, and in the late 1950s, the world turned its attention to Africa (Wieters, 2017) to bring needed development and infrastructure to the underdeveloped world (Carse, 2017). This new orientation paved the way for aid to newly independent nations in Africa. Such dynamics saw the emergence of donors as aid providers while governments and civil society organisations became aid recipients (WACSI, 2023).

Earlier, aid was provided directly to governments. However, over the years, the international community, including donor agencies, favoured the inclusion of civil society within the aid architecture and provided funding directly to organisations to provide services in areas not fully supported by the government (Fafchamps & Owens, 2008). Thus, aid was provided directly to non-state actors such as NGOs, Development Associations, etc. During that period, NGOs assumed a more significant role as development actors and attracted a larger slice of foreign aid (World Bank, 2004; Banks et al., 2015). International funding to NGOs, most of which are in Africa, rose from \$2.7 to \$7.2 billion between 1970 and 1990 (Atampugre, 1997). This inclusion of NGOs within the aid architecture contributed to the boom of organisations within the civic space (WACSI, 2015). In Benin, for example, NGOs increased from 140 to 1,500 between 1990 and 1998 and a decade later to 12,002 (Assah, 2015).

International aid evolved over the years into channels for donors to finance good governance, service delivery, democratic processes, and accountability through NGOs (Banks et al., 2015; Ismail, 2019). These developments facilitated the growing role of donors in ensuring the financial sustainability of NGOs in developing countries, as most organisations receive their funding directly or indirectly from international donors (Smith, 2007; Fafchamps & Owens, 2008; WACSI, 2019). However, while a surface view of aid may suggest its noble aims, scholars criticised its interwoven relationship with politics.

### **2.3. On the Dark Side of Aid**

Scholars directed multiple criticisms to aid in Africa and its aims beyond just helping the poor and bringing development to the underdeveloped world. During the Cold War, aid was a political tool used by some

Western nations to prevent some African countries from joining either the Communist or Capitalist block. "The end of the Cold War allows the United States and other donors to target aid more selectively, rather than using aid to strengthen corrupt but geopolitically useful autocracies" (Bräutigam & Knack, 2004, P275). Furthermore, then-French President Francois Mitterrand used aid as a tool in strongly encouraging African countries to re-embrace democracy after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of communism:

"It remains a fact that this aid, as we have come to know it, would be slow towards authoritarian regimes, who would not accept the transition towards democracy, and forthcoming towards nations that will make the step towards democracy with courage." (Mitterrand, 1990).

While aid has contributed to brewing organisations within the civic space, it also threatens these organisations' financial sustainability. NGOs increasingly depend on international donors to finance their operations (Banks et al., 2015; WACSI, 2019). Such dependency also fuels a power imbalance between donors and NGOs (WACSI, 2023), undermining NGOs' legitimacy among their interest groups by presenting them as foreign entities (Ziemke-Dickens et al., 2012).

## **2.4. Factors Affecting Resource Mobilisation among NGOs in the Global South**

### **2.4.1. Macro Factors**

The aid landscape has recorded waves of tectonic shifts encapsulated into macro factors affecting NGOs' resource mobilisation from international donors. First, donors are increasingly shifting from financing development in the Global South to issues within their countries (WACSI, 2019). Secondly, economic growth and the discovery and exploitation of natural resources fuelled calls from African governments to move "Beyond Aid" (Arhin et al., 2018). The context saw the emergence of new terms, including "decolonising aid," "shifting the power," "local resource mobilisation," and "civil society sustainability" (WACSI, 2019, WACSI, 2023). Such shifts have contributed to changes in aid provision in contemporary times.

Politics and national policies remain essential elements shaping funding to CSOs. A quantitative study analysing bilateral aid flows highlighted political considerations and democratisation as determining factors likely to influence NGOs' resource mobilisation (Alesina & Dollar, 2000). Local policies are also critical to ensuring NGO funding. Hostile governmental regulations against foreign funding may limit the international community's donations to a country and hamper NGOs' funding (Banks et al., 2015; Bromley et al., 2020; Musila, 2019).

Donors' priorities remain critical in shaping international funding allocations (WACSI, 2019). A historical analysis of funding to NGOs in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Thailand underlined that international funding depended on donors' priorities (Parks, 2008). The analysis identified that funding to NGOs previously prioritised accountability and human rights issues; however, in the late 90s and early 2000s, following the 9/11 attack in the USA, donors' priorities shifted to issues such as economic development. When donors' priorities change, some NGOs previously receiving funding lose the donors' support, given the mismatch between the donor's new priorities and the NGOs' thematic area. This therefore pushes NGOs to develop adaptation strategies. A qualitative study with four NGOs in Lebanon highlighted that when international donors' priorities change, local NGOs either exit from their relationship with donors, voice their concerns to find a middle ground with donors, or adjust to the new priorities (AbouAssi, 2012). Adjusting suggests that NGOs tweak their thematic areas to capture donors' new priorities. This finding is further reinforced by studies in Malawi, where NGOs adopted in their existing missions the fight against AIDS over pressing development issues as donors prioritised funding for HIV/AIDS (Morfit, 2011).



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Heightened priorities on local issues may also influence funding allocations. A country standing in poverty and life expectancy may favour international funding allocation to NGOs (Nancy & Yontcheva, 2006). A historical analysis of Oxfam and ACORD interventions in Burkina Faso to address food security suggests local issues may become priorities for donors (Atampugre, 1997). This is further stressed in Somalia, Uganda, and Nepal, where local humanitarian, socioeconomic, and environmental crises shaped donors' priorities (Ismail, 2019). These studies highlight an interaction between development in the national context and donor funding to local NGOs.

Internal dynamics within NGOs also affect resource mobilisation. In a quantitative study, Wachira (2016) identified NGO governance factors such as donor relationship, funding diversification, and financial management as critical in ensuring NGOs' sustainability in Kenya. In their qualitative study on resource mobilisation and financial management among NGOs in Ghana, Arhin et al. (2018) also recorded organisations multiplied their funding sources, built partnerships with donors, and reduced their expenditures by cutting costs.

#### **2.4.2. Micro Factors**

While international funding remains critical, local resource mobilisation is now an essential avenue for NGOs in Africa. However, several factors affect local resource mobilisation. A quantitative study in Uganda found that NGOs receiving foreign funding are not likely to be able to mobilise local resources (Banks et al., 2015). This was justified because NGOs receiving foreign funding were already established and benefited from existing networks. While younger NGOs, most of which are managed by someone working with another organisation, were able to mobilise more resources locally, particularly in-kind resources.

Other factors affecting local resource mobilisation include low accessibility and understanding of new technological tools, including GoFundMe, inadequately skilled staff, and a lack of local philanthropic culture in Africa (WACSI, 2019; WACSI, 2023). A study in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal identified limited capacity and leadership hampered local resource mobilisation:

“The space for domestic resource mobilisation among local CSOs appeared to have been hampered by the lack of effective leadership and capacity of local CSOs to mobilise domestic resources.” (WACSI, 2022, P7).

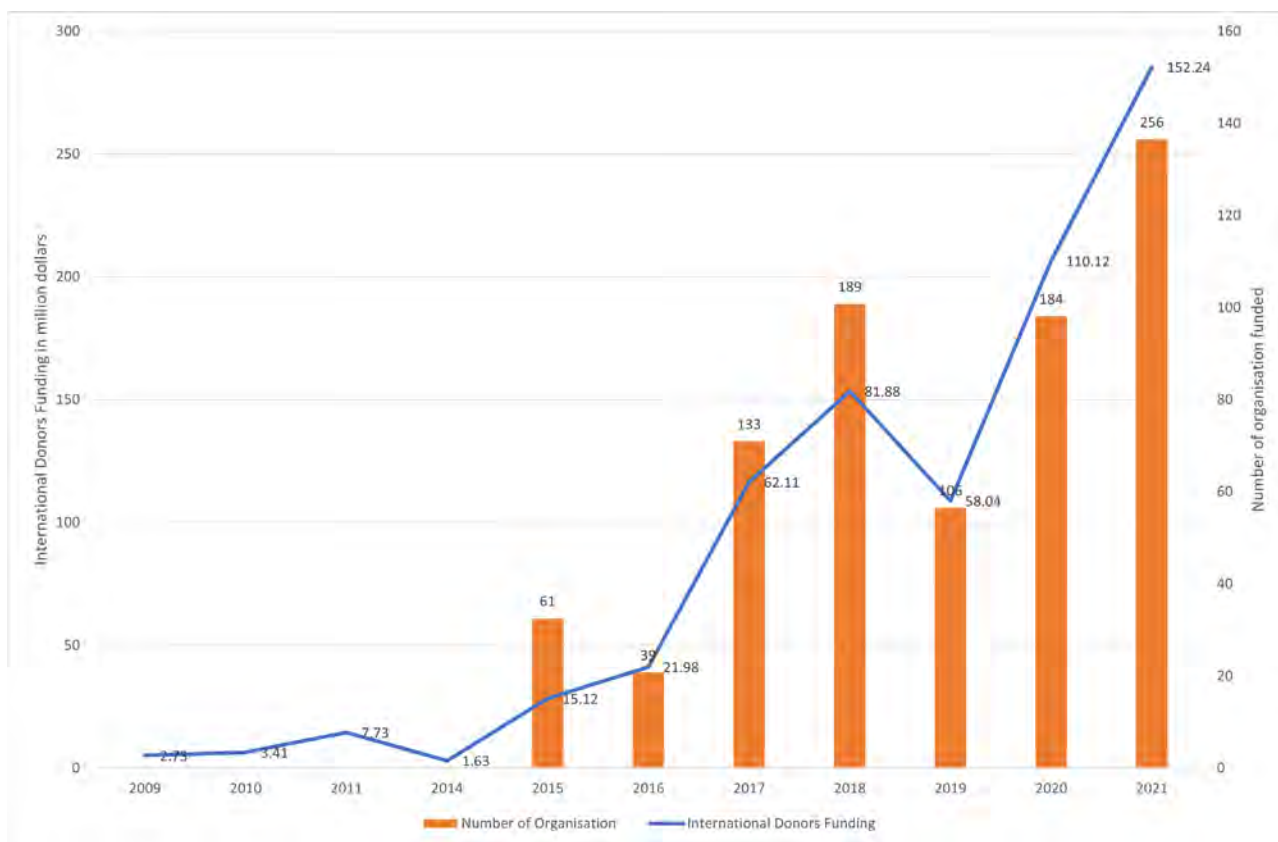
The foregoing suggests macro and micro factors affecting NGOs’ local resource mobilisation. Macro factors include government policy, local contexts, and donors’ priorities. Micro factors include donor relations, leadership, financial management, and capacity.

## 2.5. Painting the Canvas: A Socio-political Contextual Analysis in Burkina Faso

### 2.5.1. On International Funding

Burkina Faso, country of the Upright Men, has recorded a rising role of civil society organisations in shaping the political landscape and supporting developmental objectives throughout its socio-political history. In 1966, a civic movement fuelled by trade unions against the government led to the forced resignation of then-president Maurice Yameogo (Foka, 2023). In 1980, protests by trade and teacher unions paralysed the government and contributed to the overthrow of then-president Sangoule Lamizana (Coulibaly, 2015). In 2014, civil society mobilisations ended the 27-year regime of then-president Blaise Compaore (Frère & Englebert, 2015).

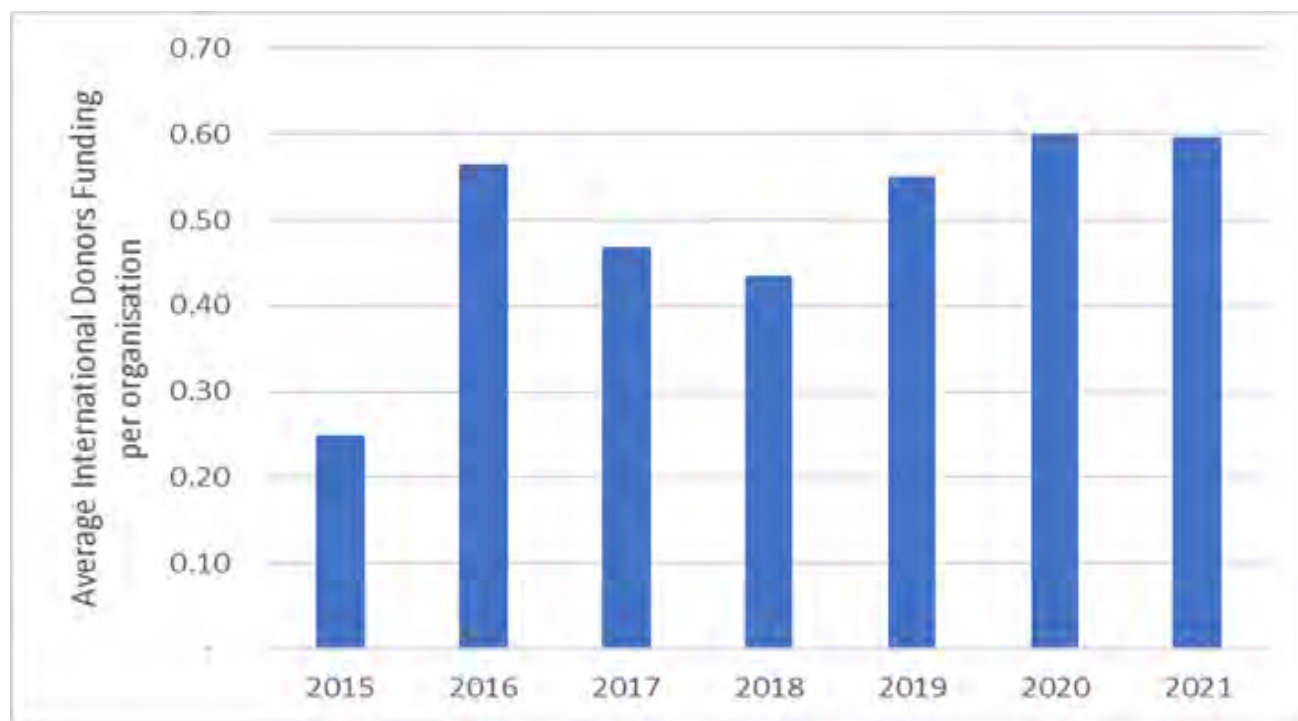
Beyond the political arena, civil society organisations support the vulnerable. In the 70s, CSOs led humanitarian relief following a severe drought. After the wave of democratisation in the 90s, CSOs added issues related to governance and policy to their portfolio. CSOs in Burkina Faso today play two prominent roles: Supporting the vulnerable in improving their well-being and leading policy and good governance efforts (Coulibaly, 2015). CSOs in Burkina Faso receive tremendous financial support from International Organisations. A trend analysis of annual international findings to CSOs in Burkina, highlighted in Figure 1, shows increased international funding to NGOs and Development Associations in Burkina Faso from 2009 to 2021.



**Figure 1:** Year-on-year comparison of international funding NGOs and Development Associations in Burkina Faso received from 2009 to 2021



Figure 1 shows the increasing international funding flux to CSOs year-on-year from 2009 to 2021. The figure may suggest that as years pass by, the amount of funding and the number of NGOs receiving funding are increasing. However, an average calculation of funding received per organisation per year, as demonstrated in Figure 2, highlights that while in Figure 1, it appears international funding is increasing every year, on average, funding per NGO and development associations decreased in 2017, 2018, and 2019 before recovering in 2020. This increase in 2020 and 2021 may be due to the increased funding towards NGOs in the humanitarian sector as would be explained in the data analysis section.

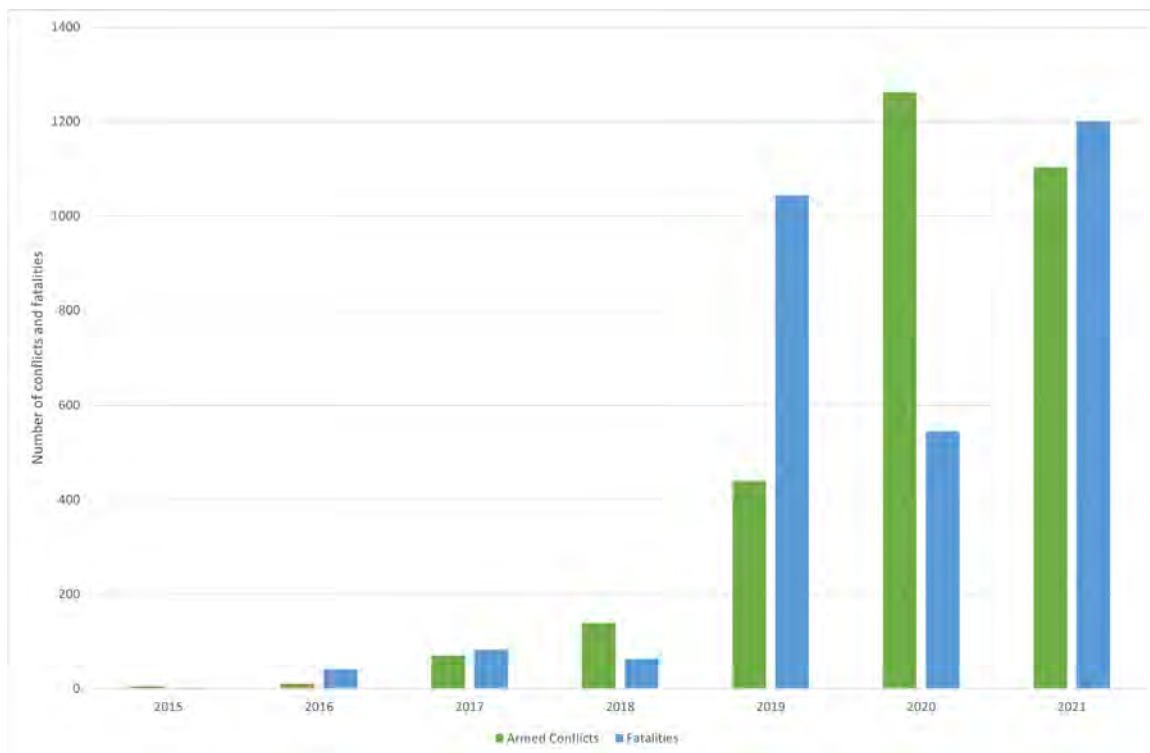


**Figure 2:** Year-on-year comparison of average international funding NGOs and Development Associations in Burkina Faso received from 2015 to 2021 (Constructed by Author in Excel using data from annual reports on Cooperation and Development) (funds in million dollars)

## 2.5.2. On the Conflict Context

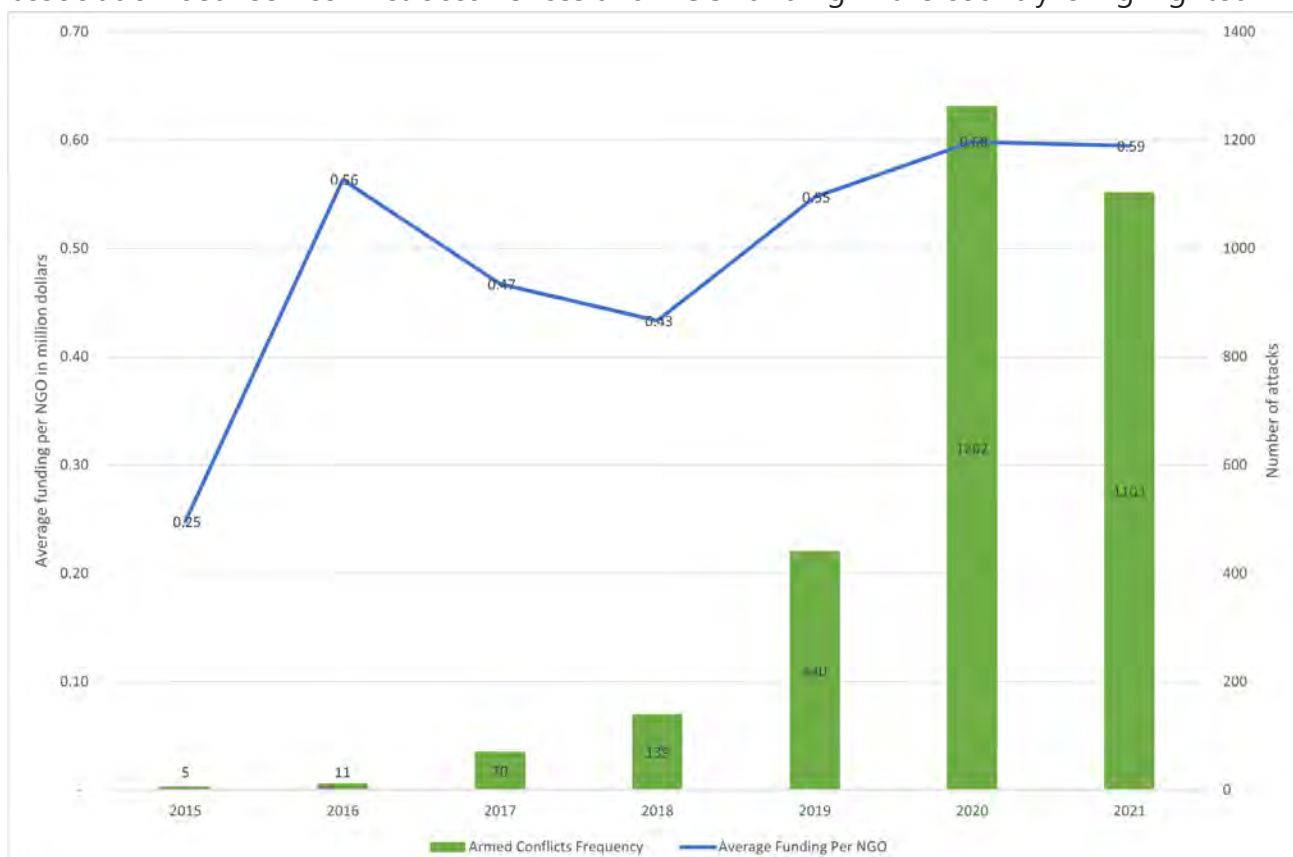
Terrorism, war, and Islamic radicalisation have plagued the Sahel region since 2012 (Cherbib, 2018). Despite governmental efforts, the triple-pronged crisis has morphed into armed conflicts, exacting a toll on civilians, social life, and the normal course of activities (Borrell, 2022). In 2022, Burkina was the second most affected country by armed conflicts after Afghanistan and recorded the largest increase in deaths worldwide, from 759 in 2021 to 1135 in 2022 (IEP, 2023).

Burkina recorded its first terrorist attack in 2015 (ICG, 2020) and today counts several active terrorist groups, including the homegrown Ansaroul Islam, Jama'at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), etc. (ICG, 2020) within the country. Other major violent actors include local vigilantes, bandits and militia groups with weapons, gold miners, and self-defence groups. The situation has compounded into large-scale community violence in rural areas, conflicts between farmers and herders, ethnic clashes, and land disputes (Eizenga, 2019; ICG, 2020; Clingendael Institute, 2021). The conflict has turned the country into the new epicentre of the humanitarian crisis in the Sahel region (Lamarche, 2022), with almost two million internally displaced citizens and spiking food insecurity (NRC, 2023). Figure 3 highlights year-on-year numbers of conflict events and fatalities. In the appendix, point 1 highlights how armed conflicts were operationalised in this study.



**Figure 3:** Year-on-year comparison of armed conflicts and fatalities in Burkina Faso from 2015-2021 (Constructed by the author in Excel based on conflict data from ACLED).

The increasing frequency of conflicts in Burkina Faso, as highlighted in Figure 3, suggests an emerging context likely to affect resource mobilisation among NGOs in the country. An analysis of secondary data to identify a possible association between conflict occurrences and NGO funding in the country is highlighted in Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Year-on-year comparison of armed conflicts and NGO funding from 2015 to 2021 (Constructed by the author in Excel based on data from ACLED on conflicts and funding data from annual reports on Cooperation and Development)





*Photo via Pexels*

Figure 4 highlights and compares the average international funding trend received by NGOs in Burkina Faso and the year-on-year occurrence of armed conflicts in the country. The figure reveals that in 2016, when armed conflict frequency was low to marginal, international funding was high; however, as the frequency of conflicts increased in 2017 and 2018, funding further decreased. In 2019, although there was a slight improvement, funding remained lower compared to the 2016 levels before increasing and remaining stable in 2020 and 2021. This slight improvement could be due to the increasing flow of aid for humanitarian purposes. The observation in 2016, 2017, and 2018 may suggest a certain relationship between armed conflicts (as an emerging context) and NGO resource mobilisation in Burkina Faso.

This literature review underlined how aid and NGOs evolved in the global south over the years. Furthermore, the literature underlined through scholarly studies factors likely to affect resource mobilisation among NGOs. While macro and micro factors are likely to affect resource mobilisation

among NGOs, at the time of this study, it appears that no study has been found conducting an analysis on how armed conflicts as an emerging national context affect resource mobilisation among NGOs, particularly in Burkina Faso. The emerging context suggests new dynamics that may require an investigation. Therefore, this research investigates how armed conflicts, as an emerging context, affect financial resource mobilisation among NGOs in Burkina Faso.







*Photo by Unsplash*

## **3.0. Study Methodology and Data Sources**

### **3.1. Study Design**

This study adopts a mixed methodology leveraging quantitative and qualitative data. The study design consists of two data sources: Primary data collection through a survey and interviews and secondary data collection through desktop research. The desktop review allowed access to historical data on funding to NGOs and conflict trends in Burkina Faso. Annual reports from the Report on Cooperation and Development of the Ministry of Economics, Finance, and Development in Burkina Faso provided data on annual funding received by local NGOs (i.e., NGOs created by people from Burkina). The ACLED Dashboard on Conflicts in Burkina Faso provided conflict trends. Point 1 in the appendix indicates keywords used to operationalise armed conflicts on the ACLED Dashboard. The Appendix Figure A1 on Point 2 provides detailed information on the most frequent types of conflicts recorded by NGOs.

A survey allowed the collection of quantitative data. The survey recorded 70 NGOs' responses in Burkina Faso from a pool of 268 registered NGOs at the Permanent Secretariat of NGOs in Burkina Faso (SPONG). The study adopted a purposive sampling. The response rate was about one-quarter of registered NGOs. This may suggest that the findings in this study may be generalised across registered NGOs in Burkina Faso. The survey targeted Management-level respondents, including Executive Directors, Resource Mobilisation Officers and Senior Project Officers. Among the respondents, 33% are presidents of their organisations, 23% are programme coordinators, and 13 % are executive directors. Figure A2 in the appendix provides more information on the survey respondents, and Figure A3 provides their thematic areas. Among the NGOs in the survey, 76.12% received their main funding from international donors, 14.29% from citizens' donations, and 9.52% from other NGOs based in Burkina Faso.

Out of the survey respondents, 11 NGOs expressed the willingness and availability to participate in Key Informant Interviews (KII). Table A1 in the appendix provides information on the interviewees. The KII helped collect qualitative data and understand internal dynamics, correlations, and realities that the survey may not have captured. Interviews were conducted until data saturation. This comprehensive research design and multiplicity of the data sources facilitated data triangulation and strengthened the reliability of the research.

This study is grounded in the local context. Thus, terms such as armed conflicts and the survey were designed together with local actors in the country. While the context in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger are similar, this study focuses on Burkina Faso due to limited direct state intervention in foreign funding to NGOs in the country.

### **3.2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

To form an NGO in Burkina Faso, citizens must first create a development association whose founders are members. The association must remain active for three years before registering as an NGO. However, data collected suggest that remaining a development association or registering as an NGO does not affect funding from international donors or the scope of activities. Some associations in the survey have been in existence for 20 years, and some have implemented activities in other countries. This study uses interchangeably Development Associations and NGOs in Burkina Faso.

This study leverages a conceptual framework developed based on Hirschman's theory of self-interest, as used by AbouAssi (2012) in his study on NGOs' reactions regarding changes in donors' funding priorities in Lebanon. AbouAssi's (2012) application of Hirschman's theory through a framework expanded the understanding of NGO reactions with the adjustment factor. According to the study, when donor funding priorities change, NGOs in Lebanon either exit from the relationship with the donor or voice concerns. Sometimes, local NGOs adjust to donors' new priorities to continue receiving funding. AbouAssi's study conceptualisation stops at the NGOs' reaction

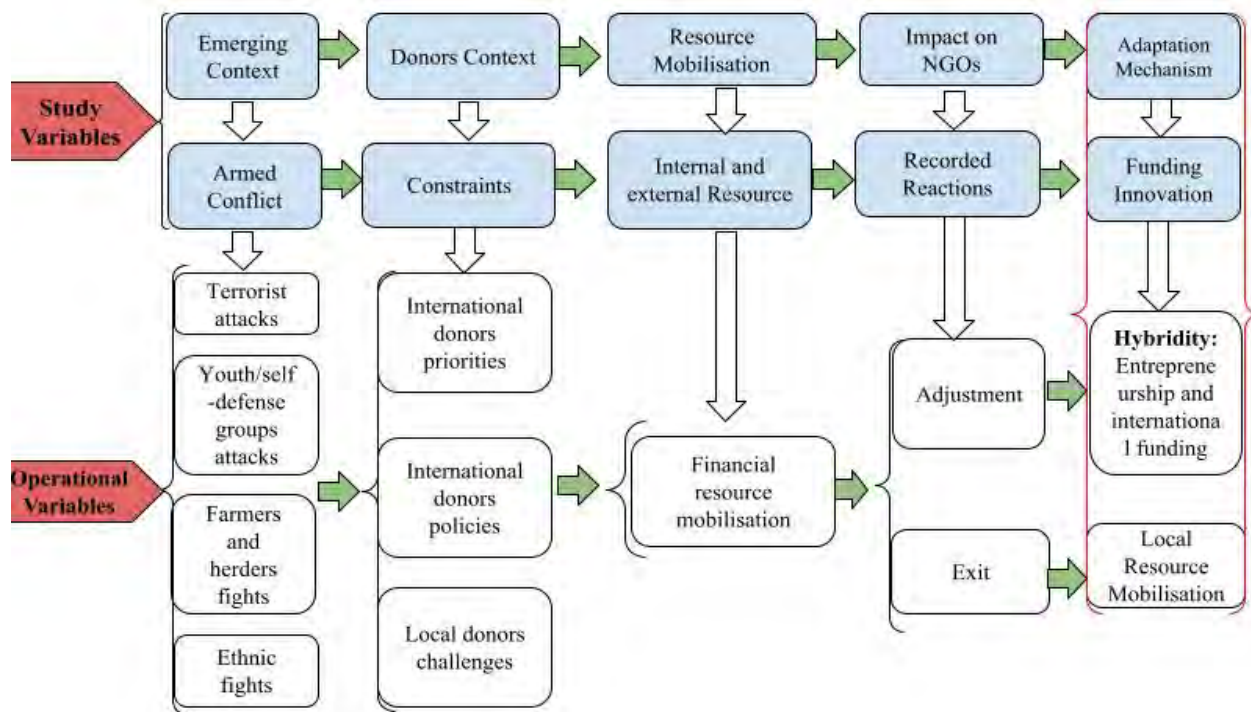


*Photo via Pexels*



without further categorising NGO size and reaction type. This study leverages the AbouAssi (2012) framework and expands on the NGO reaction theory with a conceptualisation of reaction types among NGOs based on their size.

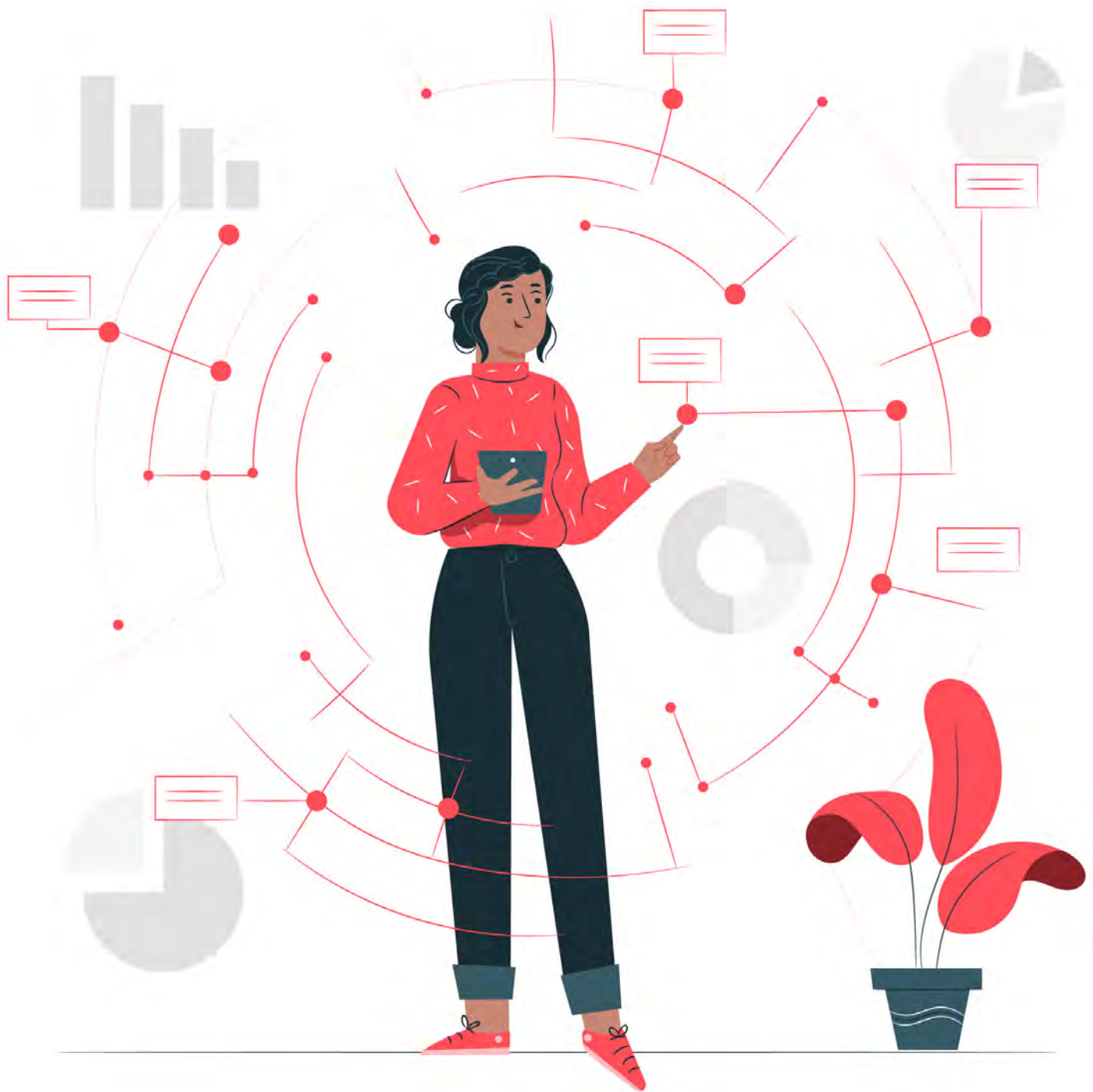
This study's conceptual framework, as demonstrated in Figure 5, adapts and expands AbouAssi's framework based on the Burkina Faso context. Terms such as types of armed conflicts were operationally defined based on local actors' inputs. In operationalising resource mobilisation, the study leverages broad literature. Resources include membership dues and donations (Fafchamps & Owens, 2008). In an analytical report, WACSI (2019) stressed a conceptual framework classifying resource mobilisation as internal and external. Internal resources refer to NGOs leveraging internally available resources to mobilise additional resources. Examples include leveraging internal capacities to provide consultancy services. External resources consist of resources from external sources such as crowdfunding. These concepts allow the researcher to operationalise the term resource mobilisation.



**Figure 5:** Conceptual Framework on the Effect of a Changing Context (Armed Conflict) on Resource Mobilisation among NGOs in Burkina Faso

This conceptual framework shows a five-level relationship mainly covering international donors' funding. The emerging context of armed conflicts influences international donors' priorities and policies and challenges local donors. This relationship is likely to influence financial resource mobilisation among NGOs and trigger the reactions of adjustment or exit. In this study, Adjustment is when an NGO aligns with donors' priorities and policies. However, Exit is when donors suspend funding to an NGO. While AbouAssi's addition of adjustment suggests the NGOs may still survive with donor funding, this study digs further to understand adaptation mechanisms and how NGOs whose funding is suspended survive. Therefore, this study proposes as a contribution to the literature funding innovation captured as hybrid funding among organisations that Adjust and local resource mobilisation as an adaptation mechanism when an NGO records an Exit of donors. Another contribution to the theory is the categorisation of which NGOs are likely to Adjust and which ones record an Exit of donors and adapt.

This study mainly investigates the effects of armed conflicts on resource mobilisation among NGOs in Burkina Faso. The sub-research questions are: In what ways do armed conflicts affect international funding to NGOs in Burkina Faso? In what ways do armed conflicts affect local funding to NGOs in Burkina Faso? How do NGOs in Burkina Faso react to changes in local and international funding?



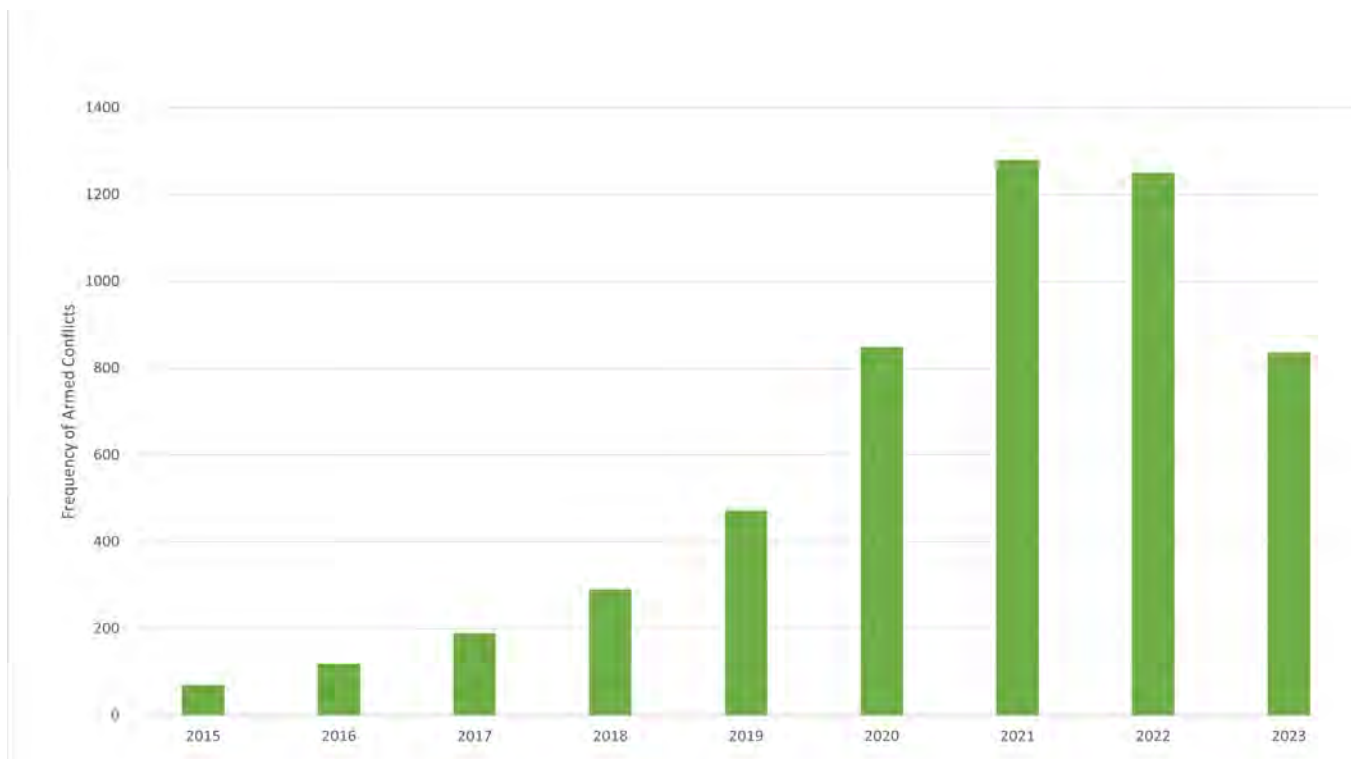
*Photo via Pexels*

## 4.0. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section highlights key findings regarding the effects of armed conflicts on resource mobilisation among NGOs in Burkina Faso. Each subheading is an episode capturing emerging themes recorded during the study and describing the realities NGOs are confronted with regarding resource mobilisation in an increasingly harsh context.

### 4.1. On Conflict Frequency

Several reports have pointed to the increasing prevalence of armed conflicts in Burkina Faso over the years. Data recorded through the survey to capture self-reported occurrences of conflicts indicate a rising trend of armed conflict occurrence since 2015 as indicated in Figure 6.



**Figure 6:** Year-on-year comparison of self-reported armed conflict frequency from 2015 to 2021 (Constructed in excel by the author base data collected through the study survey)

Both primary data on self-reported armed conflict frequency captured through the survey and secondary data collected on the ACLED match the overall year-on-year trend in armed conflict frequency. In Figure 3 and Figure 6, the frequency of armed conflict trends increased year-on-year from 2015 to 2020. However, in Figure 6, the frequency of conflicts recorded a steady decline in 2022 and 2023. The perceived decreasing frequency in the occurrence of armed conflicts in recent years may be due to the increasing effectiveness of the military, as highlighted by NGO actors during the interview as indicated: "We have recently realised that although there are attacks, the frequency is less than before. The military is taking more and more territory from these groups." KII 1. Despite the decline, insecurity remains high. Self-reported figures in 2023 show that conflicts reached a total of 800 conflicts.

While there is a rise in the role of the military, the data collected suggests armed conflicts remain frequent. Given the context, the second layer of the study sought to understand if the frequency of armed conflicts affected resource mobilisation among NGOs.

## 4.2. On Funding Flow

Securing funding remains critical for NGOs to conduct their operations. However, most development organisations in Africa have, over the years, become dependent on international donors to fund their operations (Banks et al., 2015; WACSI, 2019). This is also the case in Burkina Faso. Among the sampled NGOs and development associations participating in the survey, 76.19% depend on funding from international organisations, also known as donor agencies, as demonstrated in Figure 7.



**Figure 7:** NGOs self-reported main source of Funding 2023 (Constructed by the author in excel based data collected through the study survey)

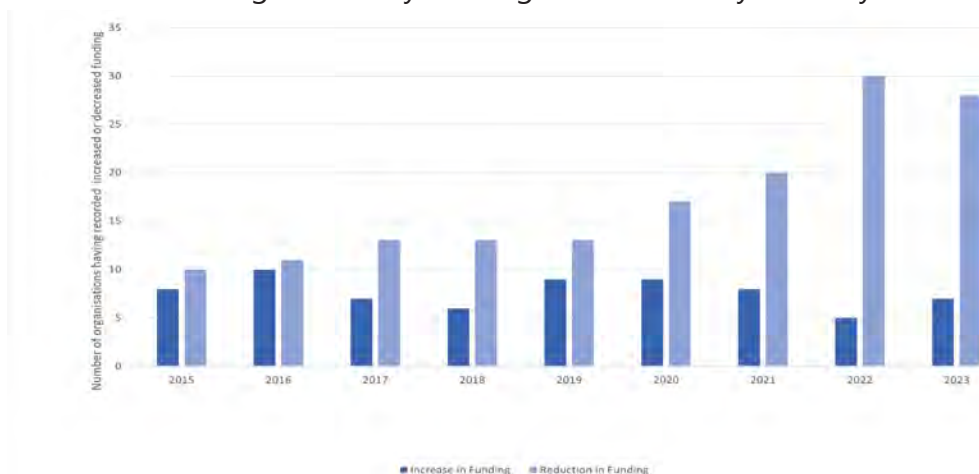
During interviews with civil society actors in the country, some highlighted their high dependency on international organisations to fund their operations.

***“Things have become very difficult. Funding is so much affected that it is rare. INGOs used to fund us. But they have left. Now, we don’t have funding. Our activities have decreased by 95%,” KII 4.***

Another interviewee further stressed the depth of this dependence on international donors:

***“We had four main funders, which allowed us to cover all 27 communes in Burkina Faso. Today, we have only one funder, and even they have reduced funding. This has forced us to focus our activities in only one commune. Just imagine from 27 to only one now.” KII 6.***

The points KII 4 and KII 6 highlighted further stressed that the scope of activities and NGO presence in the country depend on international donors. This dependency suggests that events likely to affect the international flow of funding to Burkina Faso may contribute to multiple consequences in the development sector. The survey rolled out as part of the study recorded the number of organisations that witnessed an increment or reduction in funding over the years. Figure 8 shows a year-on-year comparison of the number



**Figure 8:** Year-on-year comparison of self-reported experience by NGOs on increment and reduction in funding from 2015 - 2023 (Constructed by the author in excel based data collected through the study survey)





*Photo via Freepik*

of organisations that recorded an increment and a reduction in funding. Findings highlighted in Figure 8 indicate that the number of organisations having recorded a rise in funding increased from 2015 to 2016; however, in 2017 and 2018, this number decreased, then increased slightly and remained stable in 2019 and 2020 before decreasing the following year. This trend in self-reported experiences from 2015 to 2020 correlates with secondary data on average NGO funding trends from annual reports on Cooperation and Development in Burkina Faso and the graph analysis conducted in Figure 2. Both Figure 2 (secondary data) and Figure 7 (self-reported data) show that funding to NGOs increased from 2015 to 2016, and in 2017 and 2018, funding to NGOs decreased. Both also show a slight improvement in funding in 2019. The third layer of the data collection sought to investigate a possible correlation between the frequency of armed conflicts and the year-on-year fluctuation in funding.

### 4.3. On Funding and Conflicts

Changing socio-political realities are likely to influence international funding mobilisation by NGOs (Nelson & Dorsey, 2008; Ziemke-Dickens et al., 2012). In Burkina Faso, the frequency of armed conflicts remains a potential threat to funding mobilisation among NGOs. The survey showed that 83.33% of organisations in the sample witnessed funding reduction as a direct consequence of armed conflicts in their region, as demonstrated in Figure 9. Box 1 and Box 2 highlight the case study of two organisations that have recorded



**Figure 9:** NGOs and Development Associations' self-reported source of Funding (Constructed in excel by the author based on data collected)



**Box 1: “We do not have funding anymore.”/ Source of excerpt: KI11**

**Case Study:**

**“Our organisation was created in 2001. Those days, we could receive as much as CFA 400 million (USD 659,000) from one donor. In fact, our funding from all our donors would rarely go below CFA 1 billion CFA (USD 1,640,000). However, with the emergence of armed conflicts, things have changed. It has not been overnight, of course, but as conflicts became more and more frequent, donors have turned their focus to new priorities. Even the funding criteria from international organisations have changed, and even the skills required to receive funding have all changed. And so, from 1 billion, we are now barely at 200 million CFA per year (USD 329,000). We do not have funding anymore. All we have, I will call it micro-funding, and to get those small resources, we need to apply for grants in consortium with other organisations and share the grant money.”**

**Organisation Thematic Area: Reproductive Health**

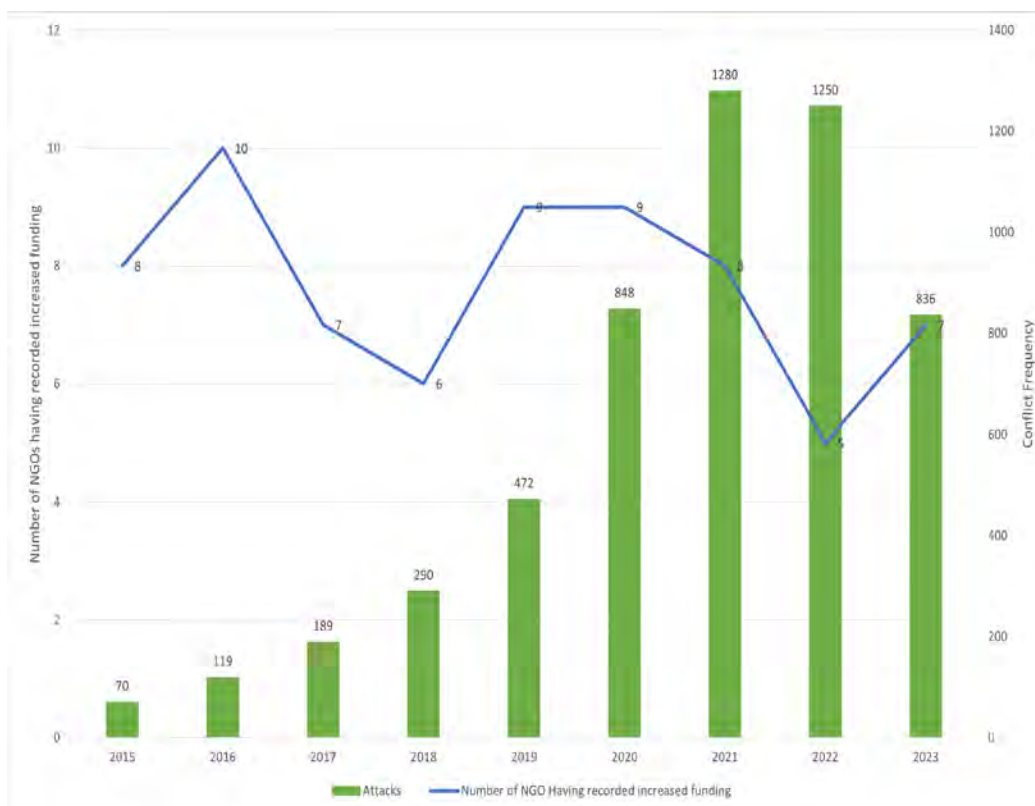
**Box 2: “We lost €150,000 in funding”/ Source of excerpt: KI15**

**Case Study**

**“We had a five year project with funding from a European country embassy (not communicated for confidentiality purposes) to reintegrate back-to-school children working in gold mines in the Centre-East Region. The total funding was € 250 000 (USD 269,000), and we were to receive € 50,000 per year (USD 53,000) for the five years. To implement the project, we collaborated with local organisations in the target region. We implemented the project for two (2) years, and all was going well. However, the embassy has representatives in Burkina Faso, so they constantly monitor the security situation. At a point when the region where we were implementing the project was marked red (a rating to indicate a high prevalence of armed conflict and insecurity), the embassy stopped the project and the funding. And so, we lost €150,000 in funding for that project. Since we are not a humanitarian organisation, or since this project is not addressing humanitarian issues, funding has stopped.”**

**Organisation Thematic Area: Sustainable Development**

a reduction in funding as a direct consequence of armed conflicts in their regions. The case studies in Box 1 and Box 2 highlight personal experiences on the direct effects of armed conflict on resource mobilisation from international donors. Further quantitative analysis sought to understand a possible correlation between the frequency of armed conflicts and funding trends. Figure 10 merges self-reported data on conflict occurrences and the trend in the number of organisations having recorded increased funding from 2015 to 2023. The figure reveals a correlation between the increased frequency of conflicts and



**Figure 10:** Year-on-year comparison of self-reported armed conflicts and self-reported experience by NGOs having recorded increments in funding from 2015 - 2023 (Constructed by the author on Excel based study survey).

a reduction in the number of organisations that recorded increased funding.

According to Figure 10, the trend in the number of organisations having recorded a surge in funding decreased from 2016 to 2018 as the frequency of armed conflicts increased year-on-year. The number of organisations having recorded surges in funding increased and stabilised in 2019 and 2020 before decreasing in 2021 and 2022 as the frequency of armed conflicts increased. The analysis in Figure 10 aligns with the secondary data analysed in Figure 4 and the case studies. The figure highlights that in 2017, 2018, 2021, and 2022, the number of organisations having recorded surges in funding decreased as the frequency of conflicts increased. The upward sporadic fluctuation of funding received in 2019 and 2020 is likely explained by increasing funding for humanitarian purposes, as indicated in one interview:

***“Since we are not a humanitarian organisation, funding was stopped. If we were doing humanitarian work here, the funding would never stop. In fact, humanitarian organisations in red zones have a lot of funding.” KII 5.***

While funding to NGOs on humanitarian operations seems to have increased, the general context suggests that most organisations in Burkina Faso captured in the sample recorded reduced funding. The above quantitative and qualitative analysis from secondary and self-reported data in both surveys and interviews suggests that funding mobilisation decreased as the frequency of armed conflicts increased in Burkina Faso. However, what are the factors associated with armed conflicts that trigger this reduction in funding?

#### 4.4. The New Culprits: Emerging Threats to NGO Funding in Burkina Faso

##### 4.4.1. Donors and their New Priorities

To secure funding from international donors, local and international organisations’ priorities should



Photo by Pexels

align. A mismatch in priorities between donors and local NGOs may upset the relationship and affect funding streams (Morfit, 2011; AbouAssi, 2012). As the frequency of armed conflicts increased year-on-year in Burkina Faso, data collected suggests a shifting and mismatch in priority between NGOs and donors. Interviewees highlighted that the new context of armed conflicts is now shifting donors' priorities toward the humanitarian sector, as highlighted below:

***“New priorities have emerged to address the consequences of the new crisis in Burkina Faso. For us, there is a reduction of funding from our traditional sources. Now, there is a greater focus on humanitarian issues. While we used to have funding for HIV/AIDS and reproductive health, today, everything is on humanitarian issues because of armed conflicts” KII1 (Organisation Thematic Area: Reproductive Health).***

Another interviewee stressed the changing priorities of international donors in Burkina Faso.

***“Most funding in Burkina is focused on humanitarian issues now. I think the context imposes this situation. And so, if you are an NGO in Development, your funding will decrease. Donors tell us that they have funding and give us their priority areas” KII9 (Organisation Thematic Area: Agricultural development, Youth Entrepreneurship).***

The experiences depicted by both interviewees mirror a certain reality in Burkina Faso. The change of priorities from donors suggests organisations working on issues of sustainable development, reproductive health, women's rights, etc., which have traditionally benefited from funding (as these areas were of priority to donors), are now recording reduced funding. Meanwhile, organisations working on humanitarian issues have recorded increased funding. Interviewees from organisations that recorded increased funding highlighted the following:

***“Our funding is not affected. In fact, funding increased year-on-year due to the humanitarian situation since our work is mainly focused on humanitarian aspects. Our activities intensified***



*Photo via Freepik*

***around 2017 - 2018. At our creation, we started to mobilise resources from members since we used to be an association; however, we started applying for funding, and the resources increased from CFA 5 million (USD 8,000), and today we are at more than CFA 200 million (USD 329,000)" KII3 (Organisation Thematic Area: Human Rights).***

These observations suggest the emergence of new priorities among donors because of armed conflicts in Burkina Faso. Such a shift is affecting resource mobilisation among organisations with thematic areas which do not include the new priorities of the donors. The analysis conducted at this level reveals the emergence of armed conflicts affects the donors' context and influences changes in the donors' priorities. These changes affect financial resource mobilisation among organisations in Burkina Faso. Studies in Cambodia, the Philippines, and Thailand (Parks, 2008) and analytical studies by Nancy & Yontcheva (2006) further align with the findings in Burkina Faso, according to which changing donor priorities affect international funding and negatively affect funding among NGOs operating in areas which are no more priorities to donors. While overall funding has decreased in Burkina

Faso, NGOs working in donors' new priority areas have recorded increased funding.

#### **4.4.2. Existing and Emerging International Donor Policies**

Donors' policies are critical in managing grants provided to local organisations. Several NGOs in Burkina Faso are dependent upon external monitoring and evaluation to secure funding. Therefore, donors send evaluators from other countries to conduct such monitoring and evaluations, including audits. In several instances, both donors and external evaluators are supposed to go on the field. However, given the security situation, both donors and their countries have enacted policies that do not allow donor organisations' staff or nationals from certain countries and external evaluators to go out into the field in Burkina. One of the interviewees pointed out that "some donors fund us from their countries' budgets, and so they want to make sure the organisation is doing what it is meant to do with the money. Trust doesn't exclude control" KII9.

Given the adoption of these new security policies (donor organisation and country policies), donors are not able to implement their existing policies on physical monitoring and evaluation and auditing. These dynamics have contributed to reducing funding to several NGOs in Burkina Faso, as highlighted in the case studies in Box



**Box 3: “Without external evaluations, we lose funding”/Source of excerpt: KI18**

**Case Study:**

**“Some of the INGOs (that fund our activities) have a security code directing when and how they conduct field visits. When they (the staff of the donor organisation) cannot come to the field for the monitoring and evaluation, they stop their funding. According to their policies and even those of their countries, they are advised not to come here, and so since they cannot come, they stop the funding. We had an activity, and because of insecurity, the funders could not come. They said they couldn’t fund us anymore. Since they ask for external evaluation, it means the people doing such evaluations have to come from foreign countries. All this includes auditors. Sometimes, they come from the USA to engage the locals, get to know the challenges, etc. We depend on the external evaluation (to validate the project) to get additional funding. Without this external evaluation, we lose our funding.”**

**Organisation Thematic Area: Health**

**Box 4: “The auditors are sent by donors”/ Source of excerpt: KI11**

**Case Study**

**“When our partners from Europe come to Burkina, they do not go beyond Ouagadougou (the capital city). Their policies won’t allow them to. We had a project on women’s empowerment. Our funders used to come, and together, we visited the field. But now, we cannot do that. Some of them, even when they come to Ouagadougou, they don’t leave the hotel because they say the board in their organisation does not allow them to. This affects us because funders do not get to do the monitoring in the field (the area where the project is being implemented), so they suspend funding. There have been cases of financial embezzlement (among some organisations in Burkina Faso). This is the main reason why donors want to come on the field. Also auditors. Often, the auditors are sent by donors. I do not see any funding in Burkina Faso without a strong financial verification.”**

**Thematic Area: Environment and Food security, Formal and non-formal education, Water, local governance, advocacy.**

Although the case of Burkina Faso is unique regarding the dependency of local NGOs on external monitoring and evaluation and auditors who come from the donor country to receive additional funding, studies by Wachira (2016) identified NGO governance factors influence their relationships with donors. Therefore, financial management frameworks and existing policies among donors are critical for funding renewal. In this case it appears the existing and emerging policies and frameworks from donor organisations as a result of the armed conflicts negatively affect funding to NGOs in Burkina Faso.



*Photo via Freepik*

#### 4.4.3. Challenges in Local Resource Mobilisation

Creating an NGO in Burkina Faso is not direct. First, citizens must form a development association. Different individuals who are already employed or engaged in other revenue-generating activities come together to create a development association. The founders are considered members and finance their association by paying membership dues. These contributions allow the association to carry out activities. Associations should carry out activities based on membership dues for at least three years, after which they may or may not register into an NGO. Remaining a development association or not does not affect funding from international donors or the scope of activities. However, as the association/NGO mobilises more international funding, membership dues decrease. Most members contribute based on their other revenue-generating activities. Most interviewees could not tell the difference between a development association and an NGO. Therefore, this study uses interchangeably Development Associations and NGOs in Burkina Faso.

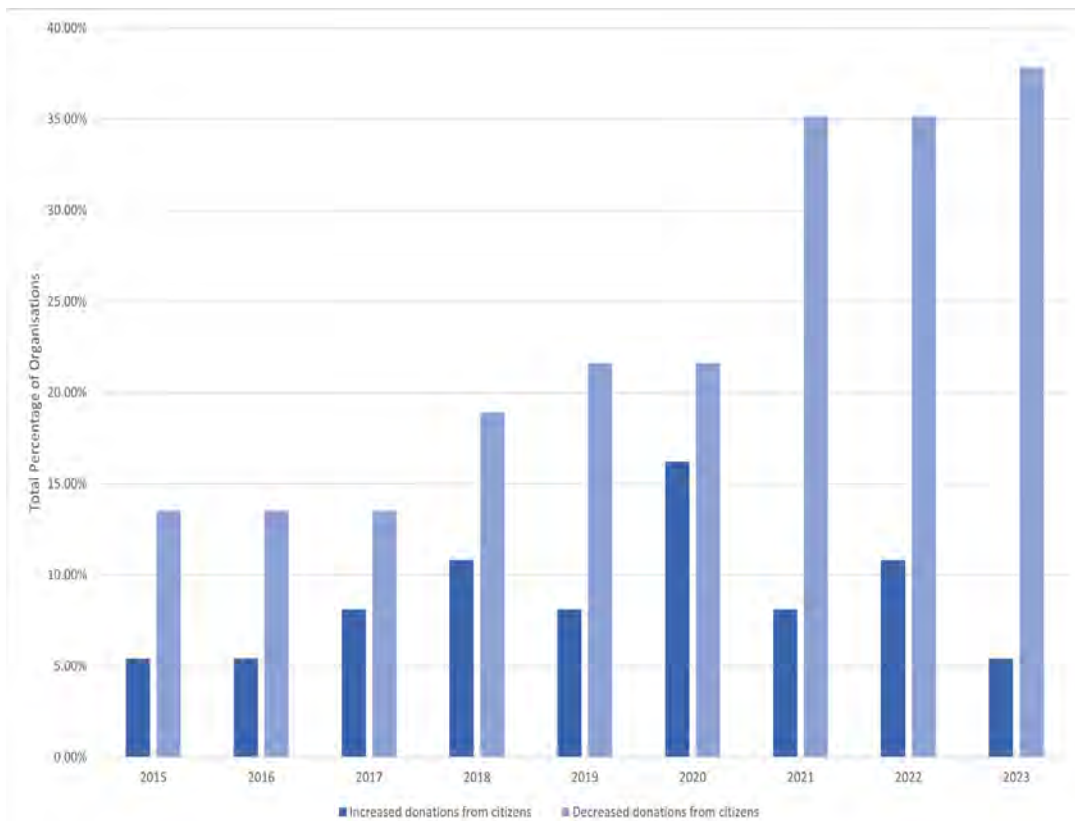
The NGO creation process in Burkina Faso means that almost all associations/NGOs at their creation and for three years at least depended on membership dues to remain afloat. As the associations/NGOs grow, they still collect membership dues, but less frequently as they are able to get funding from international donors. With the decreasing funding from international donors, several organisations are relying more and more on membership dues. However, given the intensification of armed conflicts, members' revenue-generating activities are also affected. This limits their ability to contribute, as highlighted in the following:

***“Our members are often workers in other organisations or in other activities. And the conflict affects the members’ activities, and so they are not able to make money on their own to contribute.” KII8 (Organisation Thematic Area: Health)***

Another interviewee further stressed this point:

***“We used to get funding from members, but it is a smoke screen. I do not know a single organisation (today) that can function only on membership fees.” KII11 (Organisation Thematic Area: Environment and Food Security, Formal and non-formal education, Water, local governance, advocacy).***

The challenge organisations face in collecting membership dues is further supported by quantitative data collected via the survey, as highlighted in Figure 11 which captures NGOs' experiences in mobilising financial resources from citizens in general.



**Figure 11:** Year-on-year comparison of self-reported experience by NGOs on increment and reduction in funding from citizens from 2015 - 2023 (Constructed by the author in excel based data collected through the study survey)

Figure 11 shows that from 2015 to 2023, the number of organisations which recorded a reduction in revenue mobilisation from the citizenry has increased year-on-year with a major and sustained spike in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Except for 2023, Figure 6 on self-reported armed conflict occurrence shows in 2021 and 2022, the frequency of armed conflicts sharply increased. This analysis may suggest that the increment in armed conflicts is indeed affecting citizens’ activities, thus limiting their ability to support NGOs financially. A reverse analysis of Figure 10 focusing on organisations that recorded an increase in financial support from citizens shows a seesawed picture. While the number of organisations that recorded a surge in citizens’ funding had a marginal increase from 2015 to 2018, this number decreased in 2019, before increasing in 2020. However, in 2021, 2022, and 2023, this number decreased sharply. The number of organisations with surged funding from citizens decreased in 2021 and 2022 as the frequency of armed conflicts increased.

While mobilising resources from members and citizens has been a challenge, as demonstrated in Figure 10, some organisations turned to private sector companies in Burkina Faso to mobilise resources. However, private sector institutions are also affected by the conflict and are not able to generate enough revenue to finance NGOs as they had done in the past. The case study in Box 5 captured the personal experience of an organisation:



*Photo via Freepik*



### Box 5: “Even the private sector can’t fund us anymore”/Source of excerpt: KII7

#### Case Study:

**“In 2013, 2014, and 2015, when we wanted to organise events on a national scale, several companies from the private sector and even individuals supported us. Some of them supported us without even being asked. It was spontaneous. Of course, many of them preferred to remain anonymous. In 2021, when we wanted to organise some activities at the national scale, just as we did in 2013 and 2014, we engaged individuals and private sector companies that used to support us. We engaged the same institutions. We contacted over ten (10) major companies in the country. Only one was able to help with something small. Most of them underlined the difficult financial situation they are going through due to armed conflicts, and this affects their revenues. So, they cannot help us. And we automatically understand the logic.”**

**Organisation Thematic Area: Citizen Participation in Governance, Accountability**

The findings suggest a downward spiral in local funding triggered by armed conflicts. It appears the economic effects of armed conflicts on individuals and private companies limit their revenues and affect their ability to support local organisations.

The data analysis in the section “**Emerging culprits**” highlights factors explaining the relationship between armed conflicts and international and local resource mobilisation among NGOs in Burkina Faso. The data suggest that civil society organisations in the country are found between a rock and a hard place. First, the changing context due to armed conflicts has triggered changes in donors’ priorities and funding management policies. Secondly, armed conflicts are affecting revenue-generating activities by associations/NGO members and private sector companies. These factors negatively affect associations/NGOs’ resource mobilisation from both international and local donors. This analysis captures the first three pillars of the conceptual framework showing the relationship between armed conflicts as an emerging context and revenue mobilisation among NGOs in Burkina Faso. Given the negative effect of armed conflict on resource mobilisation, local organisations in Burkina Faso are faced with a dilemma: How do we survive? The next phase of this study dives into the response NGOs developed and their adaptation mechanisms to survive.

#### **4.5. Surviving the Changing Context: “We fight to survive. There is no funding, mobility is limited, and donors don’t understand us.”**

NGOs in Burkina Faso are “fighting to survive.” Therefore, they have, in recent years, developed new methods and strategies to adapt to the changing context and thrive, given the negative effects of armed conflicts on their resource mobilisation. This section discusses how associations/NGOs in Burkina Faso are surviving and staying afloat.

##### **4.5.1. “We are witnessing NGOs’ Prostitution”**

Under the “Emerging culprits” section, this study first identified that international donors’ change in priorities has negatively affected funding to organisations that are not operating in the scope of the new priorities.



*Photo by Pexels*

According to AbouAssi (2012), when international donors' priorities change, local NGOs either exit their relationship with donors or voice their concerns to find a middle ground with donors to adjust their operations to the new priorities. In Malawi, studies highlighted that changing donor priorities triggered a change in priorities among local organisations (Morfit, 2011). The data collected in Burkina Faso further reinforces this finding as some organisations have progressively altered their mission and thematic areas and added new activities to their scope of work. The interviews below highlight some of the changes effected by organisations in Burkina Faso to survive:

***“At the beginning (created in 2001), we used to work in Health and Education, and our activities included educating/sensitising the population on sexually transmissible diseases. Since insecurity (the eruption of armed conflicts), we have changed. We added to our work something on the humanitarian sector. This allows us to get something small to survive” KII4.***

Another interviewee further stressed this change of activity towards the humanitarian sector:

***“We are now forced to undertake activities on***

***thematic areas related to the humanitarian sector. Now, we work on food security among internally displaced people. If you want to survive, you have to undertake humanitarian activities. It is now a necessity to survive. Unless you do humanitarian work, you will die. So we have to repurpose our work. Even me I have to go and do further studies in the humanitarian area. Our funding increased then.” KII9 (Organisation Thematic Area: Agricultural development, Youth Entrepreneurship).***

These changes are further stressed by KII11 with a touch on the morality of the adaptation strategy:

***“Our beliefs and convictions have changed because we need to survive. We are engaged in prostitution because each organisation has a thematic area based on their visions and priorities. But today, NGOs, including us, focus on emerging issues and thematic areas that are niche areas. And so, you need to involve things that are not your priority. We are not working by conviction, but we are opportunistic. It is not right, but we have to do that to survive.” KII11 (Organisation Thematic Area: Environment and Food Security, Formal and non-formal education, Water, local governance, advocacy).***

These findings suggest that the reaction recorded among some organisations in Burkina Faso is to engage with donors and adjust to new priorities. An emerging finding during the interviews was that most NGOs that resorted to adjusting (shifting or altering their thematic areas to include humanitarian activities) recorded in the past years annual funding of at least CFA 200 million (USD 329,000). Regardless of their annual membership dues, these organisations outrightly pointed out that “local resource mobilisation (funding from citizens or private sector) does not exist in Burkina Faso.”

In Burkina Faso, organisations resorting to this adjustment pointed to limited capacity, know-how, and expertise in the humanitarian sector since these are not their core areas of work. These limitations challenge their ability to mobilise enough funding. Therefore, funding mobilised by organisations that were not traditionally involved in the humanitarian sector is not enough for their survival. Thus, how do these organisations mobilise additional funding? While AbouAssi (2012) provided insights into the NGOs’ reactions, there is limited data on organisations that record an exit from donors due to changing priorities. There is no knowledge of how these organisations survive. Thus, how do organisations mobilise additional funding to survive? What are the adaptation strategies or funding innovations developed by organisations in Burkina Faso?

## 4.6. Adaptation Mechanisms and Funding Innovations

### 4.6.1. Hybrid Funding Mechanisms

While most organisations that have in the past recorded funding of at least CFA 200 million (USD 329,000) pointed out the non-existence of local funding; they also underlined their limited capacity in mobilising funding from the humanitarian sector, given their limited expertise. Therefore, to sustain their activities, some of them developed a hybrid funding model that consists of merging funding from international donors and internal resources such as entrepreneurial

activities to generate funding and use their expertise, as highlighted below.

***“We built a meeting space, rooms for rent to meeting participants, and a garden which people can also rent. We started construction in 2018. We used to get 5% as institutional support from funders, and that is where we saved resources from. Today, the place is running but not at full capacity. Also, government officials come and use it, however, they delay a lot in paying back. Right now, we are able to mobilise about 5000 USD per year.” KII5 (Organisation Thematic Area: Sustainable Development)***

Another group of NGOs started using their expertise in the field:

***“With the growing role of humanitarian work and (increased humanitarian) organisations, we started involving ourselves by helping in coordinating activities on the field. We connect internally displaced people facing gender-based violence (GBV) to humanitarian organisations (which may not have known of the people in need). So, this coordination allows us to get some resources.” KII6 (Organisation Thematic Area: Fight Gender-Based Violence, Nutrition, Sports and Culture, Conflicts)***

The KII6 added conflict as part of its thematic areas; however, they are not yet able to mobilise much funding for conflict-related activities. While their core activity is to fight Gender-Based Violence, they have lost almost all funding. Therefore, they use their knowledge of the field to provide coordination services to humanitarian organisations with limited local understanding of the field.

Other organisations started providing training services while leveraging their know-how:

***“We had a training with WACSI on local resource mobilisation. Following that training, once here we started organising training for organisations here. In one training we can get 500 USD. Also, we rent our chairs and benches.” KII8 (Organisation Thematic Area: Health).***





*Photo via Pexels*

It appears entrepreneurial activities are embryonic compared to the amount of funding these organisations used to receive. However, the interviewees pointed out their ability to foresight and wanting to gain freedom from donors by generating enough funding by themselves. A critical finding is that while most NGOs, during the interviews, revealed the conflict affected their members' activities, thus affecting annual contributions, there are still some members who are able to contribute financially or in kind. The resource mix from revenue-generating activities, membership dues, and humanitarian funding constitutes a hybrid funding model that allows organisations to adjust and remain afloat. This Hybrid funding model and adjustment stage could also be considered a phase. Most of the organisations pointed to limited expertise in humanitarian work. However, most of them are already getting training and acquiring skills working with other humanitarian organisations and are purposely focused on acquiring expertise to increase international funding mobilisation.

#### **4.6.2. Local Resource Mobilisation**

While it appears organisations that Adjust to the new priorities of donors developed a Hybrid funding model to stay afloat, organisations that recorded an Exit of donors from their relationship developed innovative strategies to survive.

##### **4.6.2.1. Leveraging Social Media**

Some of the organisations interviewed revealed they leveraged social media in reaching out to the diaspora and mobilising some resources, as highlighted in the following:

***“We have pages on social media, and people follow us a lot. So, people reach out to us via social media and ask us how they can help and what kind of resources we need. They don't give us a lot of money. It is often symbolic but it matters. Some citizens also call us just to give us some moral support, and this helps a lot. Most of our funding comes from the diaspora: Europe and Canada.” KII2 (Thematic Area: Youth Capacity Building and Education).***

Another organisation also reinforced the use of social media, as highlighted below:

***“We created a WhatsApp group in which we added people from the community and goodwill individuals. We have about 800 members. Through this group, we reach out and get in touch with people willing to contribute, and we get whatever they contribute. We then write a thank you letter***

The use of social media highlights that organisations are able to tap into emerging technologies to access resources beyond their geographic areas, especially the diaspora. During the interviews, KII 4 highlighted, “We have no complaint directed at the diaspora. They help us a lot. We thank them.” While social media allows organisations to reach out to potential individuals who could support them, private entities and individuals also use it to contact the organisations. This two-way relationship is becoming critical for resource mobilisation. This may suggest that social media is becoming a tool for organisations to open up to the world.

#### 4.6.2.2. Dinner and Crowdfunding

Another strategy used by NGOs that recorded an Exit from donors was to organise dinners. The logic of the dinner is to invite individuals to share a meal and ask them for contributions. Different organisations have

#### Box 6: “They dine, discuss, and contribute”/Source of excerpt: KII4

##### Case Study

**To organise the dinner, we first look for a public figure, an official who can draw the crowd. This will bring people. We then engage other organisations around us to see if we can do something together. Then, we decide on a topic of interest that people can discuss. Then we invite people. They dine and discuss. At the end we discuss the challenges and ask them to contribute. Since we started, we have been able to mobilise in one day CFA 2.700 000 (USD 4400) in Cash. Also, we record in-kind contributions.**

**Organisation Thematic Area: Citizen Participation in Governance, Accountability**

tried this strategy with varying levels of success. An illustrative case study is highlighted in Box 6. While the dinner strategy appears attractive in mobilising funding, some organisations recorded some challenges as some contributors instruct and insist on how their contributions should be utilised as highlighted by KII11:

***“We invite people from a village, the city, and even, when possible, the diaspora to the dinner. But when people give, they want the resources to go to their village. They often dictate where and what we need to do with the money. We do not have the freedom.” KII11 (Organisation Thematic Area: Environment and Food Security, Formal and non-formal education, Water, local governance, advocacy).***

The challenge recorded in the freedom of choice in how and where to use the resources may represent a limitation to the dinner approach. However, the strategy has so far helped some organisations stay afloat as donors Exit their relationships due to changes in priorities, funding policies, and challenges from private companies.



## 5.0. Conclusion

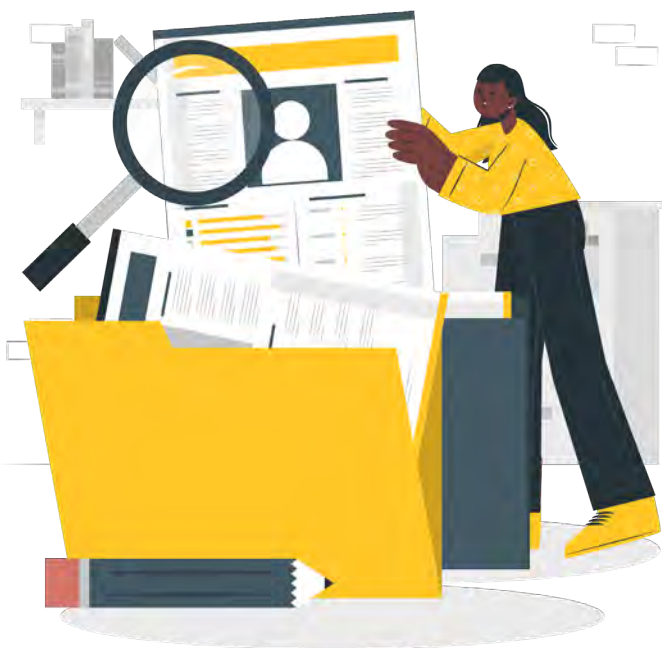
This study's purpose is twofold. First, the research sought to understand the effect of armed conflict on financial resource mobilisation among NGOs in Burkina Faso. The data collected captured that armed conflicts as an emerging context negatively affect NGO resource mobilisations. On international funding, the research highlighted those armed conflicts triggered a change in donors' priorities from traditional areas such as education, sustainable development, etc., to humanitarian issues. Therefore, organisations, most of which are not working in the humanitarian sector, recorded decreased international funding. Also, donors' inability to implement existing policies from their countries and organisations negatively affected funding to local NGOs in Burkina Faso. Furthermore, the research captured that NGOs recorded dwindling support from the private sector, which used to finance their activities. This is because the armed conflicts affected the national economy and the revenue streams of private entities. Therefore, they are no longer able to finance the activities of NGOs.

The second layer of the study sought to understand how NGOs adapted to the negative effect of armed conflicts on resource mobilisation by NGOs. This layer is the major contribution of the study to literature. The research captured that most of the NGOs that received in the past at least CFA 200 million (USD 329,000) are Adjusting to the new priorities of the donors. Thus, they are steadily departing from their original activities to now include humanitarian work in their thematic areas. Furthermore, these organisations adopted a Hybrid funding mechanism consisting of mobilising both international funding and creating revenue-generating activities through internal resources such as entrepreneurship to remain afloat. A critical finding is that some of the organisations that have completely lost their funders or those that have not fully Adjusted or have received in the past funding less than CFA 200 million (USD 329,000) developed tools to mobilise resources locally including leveraging social media to engage the diaspora and organising crowdfunding events such as dinners.



*Photo via Pexels*

A limitation of this study has been the inability of the researcher to physically visit the field. While the data collected via online tools are reliable, and the study is credible given the multiplicity of data sources and the comprehensive research design, visiting the field would have provided deeper insights and allowed the study to capture non-verbal elements which could have provided a wealth of information. While the study captures and categorises NGOs reactions based on their sizes, this was not the initial purpose of this research. Such emerging findings may require purposefully designed research to better understand NGOs reaction types as they record decreasing funding from international donors. Furthermore, NGOs represent a subgroup of CSOs. While funding remains critical, NGO operations are also important. Throughout the data collection, NGOs underscored operational changes they effected as a result of armed conflicts. Future studies could capture adaptation mechanisms in NGO operations as a result of armed conflicts. The media is also a critical component of CSOs, and future studies could dive into how emerging contexts influence funding streams to media outlets.



*Photo via Freepik*

*Photo via Pexels*



## 6.0. Recommendations



*Photo by Pexels*

Despite the adaptation strategies by the NGOs, the fact remains that most are still dependent on international donors, and the local context of armed conflicts is affecting them. Therefore, they have formulated several recommendations to improve their situation. The recommendations are all grounded in the data collected; therefore, they are all formulated by the NGOs who live the difficulties on the field and know best the challenges they face and what kind of solutions can help them bounce back from the quagmire.

### **To international Donors**

#### **- Adopt a paradigm shift and move towards an entrepreneurial mindset**

***“Funders need a mentality change. In our activities in remote areas, the donors say they cannot buy even a small car, but we can rent one. Meanwhile, renting a car for a project and the trips turn out to be more expensive throughout the project cycle than buying a car. While buying the car will help save money and allow us to keep the car after the project, which we can rent to other organisations and make some resources.” KII6.***

***“We had issues with a donor because we saved money throughout the project. We were supposed to rent places, but we ended up getting those places for free. It was an issue, although we were transparent.” KII7.***

There are several cases like the ones KII6 and KII7 shared. In such situations, the organisations have come to believe the donors are not concerned about their survival. The direct recommendation is that donors should open up to more entrepreneurial approaches that fluidify the use of funding and allows organisations to efficiently and effectively use funding while also investing in financial sustainability activities. KII11 highlighted that they have been planning for years to invest in the production of peanut oil in their community, however, the limited support from international donors has not allowed them to undertake the investment.

## **- Plan local organisations' financial autonomy**

***"We are partners, but today, we feel abandoned. The relationship between donors and organisations is only focused on the projects. Donors need to establish together with organisations they support a plan to ensure financial autonomy" KII 11***

Several NGOs highlighted they are not "**recipients**" but "**partners.**" Also, "**Donors**" are "**partners**". Therefore, the relationship between partners should be such that they work together with the local organisation to infuse in their relationships a plan such that NGOs are able to ensure at a point their financial sustainability and "freedom." It remains critical to underscore the understanding that achieving financial sustainability should be a dual responsibility of both donors and NGOs.

The benefits of this approach would be freeing up donors' resources at a point and allowing the NGOs to gain financial autonomy while contributing to the local economy. This approach could start with "donors" adopting measures in their policies to finance NGOs' sustainability with a percentage of the funding. Organisations in the study want to plan together with funders a strategy for financial sustainability. Therefore, even if donors change their priorities, NGOs can continue working in their thematic areas. While NGOs adjust, the issues they used to work on still exist. Financial sustainability will further ground NGOs in their thematic areas and allow them to continue their activities.

## **- Be fair, please**

***"Donors only fund the projects and do not give us much institutional support, and so, some people are underpaid and overworked. One person has three positions. I am an executive secretary and project lead, and I also manage administrative affairs. When we see our colleagues elsewhere, we understand that we are not treated fairly." KII10.***

While several organisations stressed their willingness and love for their work, they underlined the need for further institutional support, which would enable them to have adequate working conditions. Most interviewees underscored the necessity of donors to take into consideration in their funding criteria in Africa the employment requirements which they would apply if they were to employ a staff in their own country and ensure staff employed in Africa have health insurances, social security coverage, and other benefits.

## **To local Civil Society Organisations (CSO)**

### **- Be Transparent and accountable in managing the funding to cultivate donors' trust**

***"Everything starts with managing well the funding available and being transparent. It is when you use well what you got that more will come." KII 9***

NGOs understand there have been cases of funding mismanagement among some organisations in the country, which triggered a certain mistrust from donors. The organisations in the study highlighted that transparency and good financial management practices would cultivate trust from donors and enable them to acquire more funding to undertake bigger projects. Therefore, NGOs should adopt measures to ensure transparency in their management practices and adequately account for the funding received. Such practices would cultivate trust with donors and contribute to more funding. Some of the interviewees established a direct correlation between transparency, trust, increased funding, and NGO financial sustainability.

## - Diversify funding sources towards foundations and promote co-financing

***“The issue is that in Burkina Faso, we get funding from government institutions abroad; thus, when those governments’ policies change, funding is also affected, like the current situation with France. But foundations do not always depend on the policy orientations of a government” KII 7***

It appears several organisations in Burkina Faso have, over the years, developed strong relationships with specific donors. Therefore, when the donors exit the relationship, the NGOs struggle to survive. Furthermore, several NGOs from Burkina Faso appear to receive funding from governmental development agencies; thus, when the foreign government’s policies change, it has a direct effect on their development agencies’ funding. A key recommendation is that NGOs diversify their funding sources and include foundations that are less exposed to foreign government policies. This would allow NGOs to be less dependent and vulnerable to one or two donors.

The diversification of donors can also be applied to specific projects, such as NGOs engaging different donors to create a pool of donors to fund a project. In this situation, a project does not depend on only one donor. While the NGO is less dependent on one donor, the donors also do not carry alone the weight of the project. Thus, several donors are co-financing a specific project.

## - Create a consortium and peer mentoring

***“Some organisations are so small that they need to assemble and create a consortium or something big; if not, they will disappear. Some have already disappeared” KII 8.***

Given the multiplicity of NGOs in Burkina Faso and the challenge of securing funding, several of the big organisations have come together in consortia to apply for grants. This allows them to survive. However, smaller organisations remain isolated. Therefore, coming together to apply for funding and organising activities jointly would increase their presence and improve their ability to capture more funding. Furthermore, this strategy could be paired with a peer-mentoring strategy where organisations with more experience share their path with smaller organisations.





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## 8.0. Appendices

### Point 1: Conceptualisation of Armed Conflicts on the ACLED Website

- Violence against Civilians
- Abduction/forced disappearance
- Attack
- Sexual violence
- Explosion/Remote violence
- Grenade
- Remote explosive/landmine/IED
- Shelling/artillery/missile attack
- Suicide bomb
- Looting/property destruction

### Point 2: Most frequent forms of armed conflicts recorded by Survey Participants

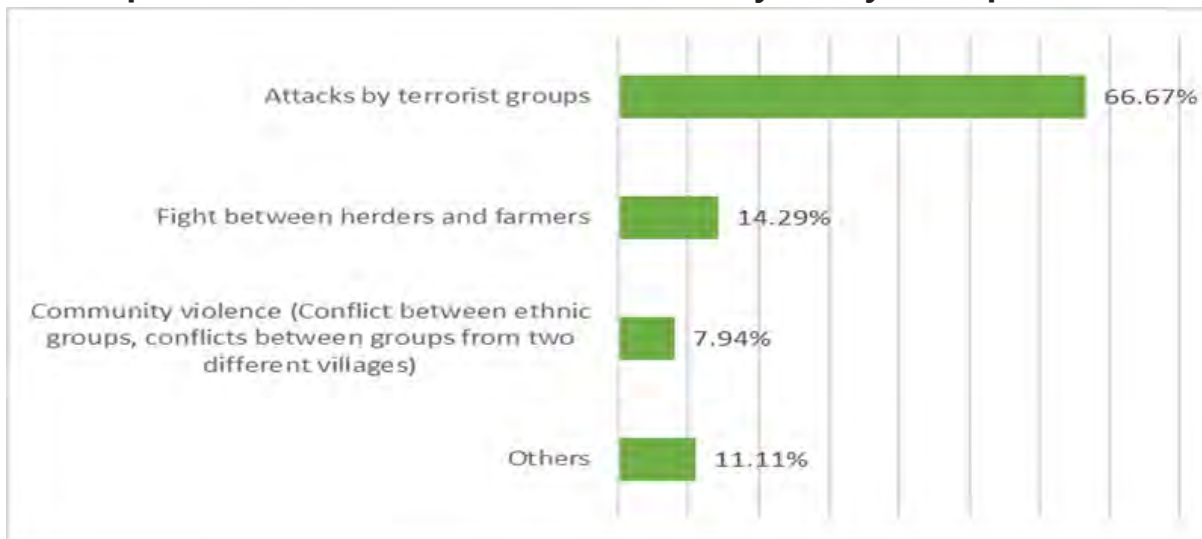


Figure A1: Most frequent forms of armed conflicts recorded by Survey Participants

### Point3: Survey Respondents Positions

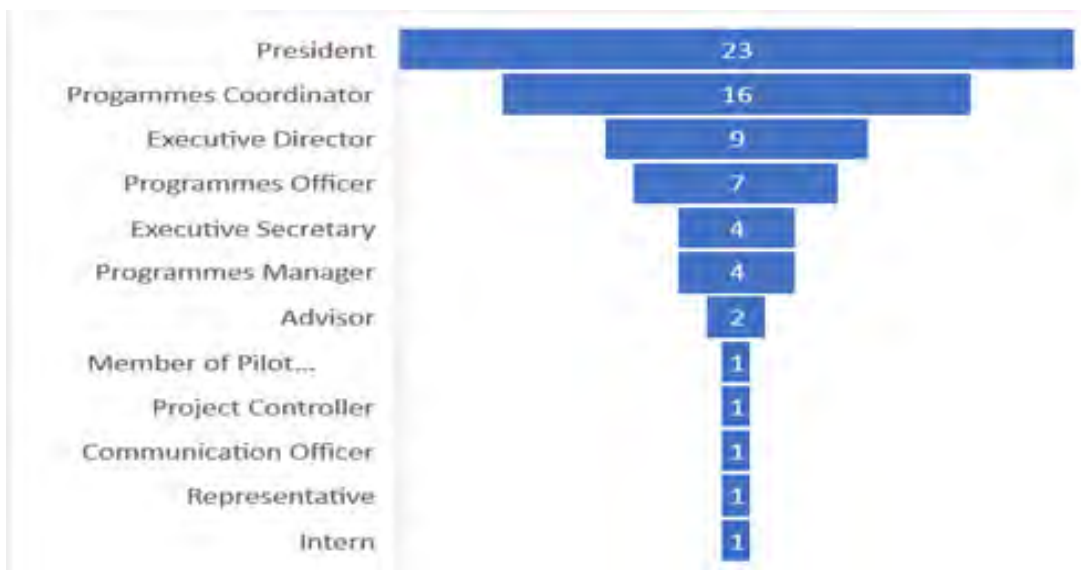
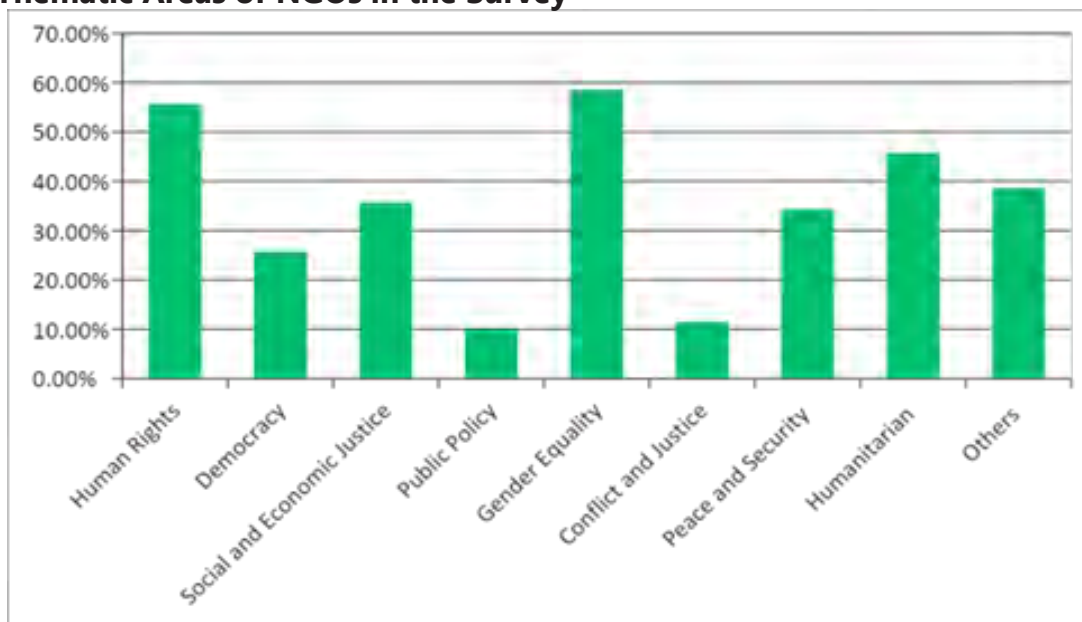


Figure A2: Survey responders' position



**Pont 4: Main Thematic Areas of NGOs in the Survey**



*Figure A3: Main Thematic Areas of NGOs in the Survey*

**Point 5: Positions of Key Informant Interviewees**

Key Informant Position in Organisation	Number
President	3
Programmes Coordinator	3
Programmes Officer	2
Executive Secretary	1
Technical Advisor	1
Humanitarian program coordinator	1

*Table A1: Positions of Key Informant Interviewees*



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